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god "Dagan, Dagon," and shows convincingly that he was not a fish-god, but most probably an agricultural deity, related to the Hebrew word for "corn" (*dāgān*). James Strachan gives a clear historical statement of "Criticism (Old Testament)." C. Prüfer amplifies the real significance of "Drama" among the Arabs at the present day.

The exhaustive character of every article is emphasized and enhanced by the citation, either in footnotes or at the end, of a selected specialized bibliography on the phases discussed.

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CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS¹

Faith is the fundamental element in religion. In faith there is an essential and regulating intellectual principle. "Observation and knowledge of the facts of life, wonder, curiosity, fear and doubt in presence of them, underlie religion, but unless they issue in distinctive faith, religion is still unconstituted. Faith does not shut its eyes to things seen, but, while seeing them, looks beyond to realities discerned behind them." Here we find the keynote to Dr. Curtis' book. The following five hundred pages are not a dogmatic but a historical unfolding of its embodied thought. There is no religion without a creed and confession, and this declaration is just a plain matter of history.

At the beginning, the author gives valuable definitions of words that are in constant use but of which there is too often no very clear conception of the meaning. A "Creed" is a short, comprehensive, dignified, frequently used, often rhythmical, statement, in the first person, of faith. A "Confession" is a more minute and systematic statement of faith, or creed. A "Catechism" is a creed or confession broken up and analytically simplified into a series of didactic questions and answers to assist the memory and intelligence of the young and unlearned. In like manner are defined: "Manifesto," "Declaration," "Profession," "Platform," "Symbol," "Consensus," "Covenant," "Form," "Formula," "Standard," "Rule of Faith," "Syllabus," "Decrees," "Canons," "Articles," "Theses," "Propositions," "Places," "Revision." We have put in the whole list because we believe there is need of greater precision in the use of these terms.

Having made a statement of his hypothesis, Dr. Curtis proceeds to

¹ *A History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith in Christendom and Beyond.* By William A. Curtis. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911.

see whether it is true. Comprehensively and concisely he takes in the whole field of religious experience. It is interesting to observe the number of cases in which Christianity has forced the non-Christian religions into clearer and more advanced statements of their beliefs.

Among the ancient Hebrews religion was natural. Men were born into it. It was the distinctive possession of the race. But when it became the religion of a book and the impulse arose to define its faith, sectarianism appeared. "Hear O Israel: The Lord is thy God, the Lord is one." The Psalms and Isaiah abound in creed matter, and the growth in later Jewish literature is unmistakable.

As we come on into the New Testament the advance is very marked. "In all the Gospels, conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the veritable son of God, is represented not only as His own fixed possession and the basis of His ministry in all its manysidedness, and as strengthened by the repeated Voice from Heaven at His baptism and transfiguration, but as increasingly shared by the Baptist, by the disciples and by others who came into contact with Him." In the other apostolic writings "the types of confession found in the Gospels are reproduced and extended. All preaching, all profession, and all participation in the church's young life was of the nature of confession."

Then when we come to the early stages of church history we are fairly embarked on the wide stream of creed development. A great, decisive, culminating point was reached at Nicaea, and both for weal and for woe the Christian world has been permeated with creeds, confessions, and catechisms—and our author without a trace of bias has respectfully and concisely handled them all—over one hundred and fifty in the aggregate. A review of them under such skilful and sympathetic direction cannot but have a liberalizing effect upon any open-minded reader.

At the end of the review follow chapters on "General Retrospect," "Reflections on the History," "Problems of Retention and Revision," "Subscription and Its Ethics," "The Ideal Creed." No short notice can do justice to these chapters. A single word must suffice. The world will never outgrow creeds and confessions. There are many evidences of reaction in our times, and resistance would be futile. Then shall we retain or revise? Both, in a sense. The future lies, not with the Greek and Roman churches, but with the great branches of the Reformed church, which with all their shortcomings have learned a higher Catholicity and a simpler ideal of dogma. But we must remember that "the moment our creeds and confessions begin to cramp the spiritual

faculties and impair access to truth and to the spirit of Scripture they ring their own knell.”

If we adequately solve our problems of retention and revision, the far more difficult problem of the ethics of subscription will be relieved of many of its heart-breaking perplexities. Our author justly criticizes Lord Morley and Professor Sidgwick for their amateurish treatment of this subject—an amateurishness born of superficiality. The work closes with valuable historical tables and an index. The volume is attractive in its makeup.

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